

01426

1963/11/29

November 29, 1963

TO: The Secretary

FROM: G - U. Alexis Johnson

SUBJECT: Cuban Contingency Planning

You will recall that during the Cuban crisis and the discussions that followed, it emerged that all of the military planning was based upon a massive assault using the conventional tactics of heavy bombardment preceding the landing, etc. Several abortive attempts were made through the Cuban Coordinator mechanism to engage the JCS in planning for other contingencies, such as an uprising or coup, which would call for graduated responses for support on our part so as to maintain maximum Cuban character to the action. However, the Coordinator was not able to engage the Joint Staff or the JCS in any meaningful way.

Therefore, in agreement with Mac Bundy at the time, Paul Hitse and I agreed that we would undertake such a plan as a joint state-DOD project in the pattern of other contingency planning that we had done with respect to Cuba. This project has been going on for many months on a very restricted basis with the cooperation of a few key personnel in ARA and the CIA, with Paul engaging the Joint Staff and the JCS. I also had an informal discussion on the subject with Page Smith when he took over CINCLANT. I have not sought to force the pace because very early in the exercise it accomplished the purpose of getting the JCS to thinking in terms of graduated responses to varying situations and giving CINCLANT some charter for planning on a similar basis.

However, we have now arrived at the point where the JCS has taken the position that it will not issue the instructions to undertake additional required planning without Presidential or other higher level approval of the concepts contained in the joint State-DOD contingency plan. I have taken the position that it would not be appropriate to seek the President's approval for a contingency plan of this kind, but have agreed with DOD that the approval of yourself and Secretary McNamara would be sought to carry out the additional detailed contingency planning required within the concept of this overall plan.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/3DC/MEF

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The attached plan, which has now been approved by Paul Nitze, Cy Vance, the JCS, CIA and myself, contains the defects of any such interdepartmental effort but I believe it is basically satisfactory. The essence is that we would be prepared, upon receiving the report of any substantial uprising in Cuba, immediately to dispatch a team into Cuba to make contact and obtain information on which to base our decisions with respect to further action. If the decision were made, initial support would be furnished in a semi-covert manner so as to avoid a public commitment as long as possible. On the decision to make a public commitment on the success of the operation we would move to open logistical and air support of the insurgents while readying and subsequently introducing whatever level of support seemed required to assure success of the insurgents. The plan also provides for laying a political base, especially in the OAS. The entire concept is based upon maintaining the maximum possible character of an indigenous Cuban action rather than an "American invasion".

Recommendations:

1. That you authorize me to inform the DOD that you approve the plan as a base and framework for further detailed contingency planning, as set forth in the recommendations on page 22 of the plan.

APPROVE _____

DISAPPROVE _____

2. That on a suitable occasion you inform the President of the existence of this plan and brief him on its outline (I will also make a copy available to Mac Bundy).

APPROVE _____

DISAPPROVE _____

Attachment:

Draft contingency plan
on Cuba.

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